

Southwest Area Engine Operators Committee Meeting  
February 19, 2004 - Goldfield Ranch

Minutes from the fifth meeting:

The meeting was called to order at 0830 on Thursday, 02/19/04 at the Goldfield Ranch conference room. Fifteen people were in attendance from the southwest area, with 8 of the 10 zones being represented. Taos and Lincoln Zones were not represented. The agenda called for introductions, a session on zone rep. responsibilities, type 6 engine upgrades, and update from the equipment committee, fireline handbook revision updates, NWCG driving standards update, NWCG work to rest update, a contractor issues session, the SWA Engine Academy Review, and a session on zone issues.

A brainstorming session was held to get input from everybody on what the zone representative responsibilities should be. The overall responsibilities included organizing the zone, and including all agencies, districts, and overhead.

- Communication should be had with all of the above, including meetings, email, phone calls, web site, fax, and "face to face" communication. Reps should also get input from overhead, forest or district FMOs and include their issues in meetings.
- Reps should also get non-participating agencies involved, even if it requires persistent communication with the non-participating agencies. Getting these agencies to the zone meeting would be a great first step. Also meeting with the FMOs and other overhead of these agencies might help too. A possible combining of zones in New Mexico of the Taos and Sante Fe zones might be an option.
- Mentorship/recruitment should also be a priority to ensure a steady flow of people that are "in the loop" with what is happening in their zone and the region.
- There was also discussion of using the zone dispatch web pages to post meeting times, dates, etc, as well as using interactive pages to get more feedback.
- SWAEO Responsibilities
  - Coordinate meeting to get zone reps together

- Politics (representation) and using "canned" presentations to gather support for academy/training.
- Mentorship (recruitment)
- Zone Issues (Prioritized) and resolve issues
- Implementation of issues and giving the zones issues to be discussed at home.
- Web Page at the Regional Level

Mike Tucker went on to discuss Type 6 engine upgrades. The Prescott National Forest is starting to implement the new position descriptions with the GS-7 Captain and GS-6 Engineer positions. Some Forests are looking at the GS 7-6-5 structure. Certain PD's are currently being created in AVUE. The PD's will be submitted to HR for approval.

Bob Shindelar gave a power point presentation for the Fire Equipment Committee. Standardization of equipment is still the main focus of the committee right now. A fire equipment ordering guide is being developed.

Mike Tucker gave the PMS 410-1 vs. 5109.34 update. Before Christmas, there was a request for input about revisions to the fireline handbook. The proposed changes were to lower the standards of a type 6 engine to a 30 gallon per minute pump. On a type 3 engine, the standards were to be lowered to a 2 person staffing and to lower the hose requirements. In response to a letter spearheaded by Todd Lerke and Mike Tucker, the minimum staffing level will be at 3 people for both type 3 and 6 engines in the SW region. The pumps will also stay at 50 GPM. However the amount of hose required for the type 3 engines will be lowered. Also, in the SW region mobilization guide, type 6 engines with chase trucks will be available to be sent from the home unit (at the home units discretion). The fire that the engine shows up on must accept the chase truck (in region 3).

The SWAEOC was also requested to put together a working group on Code 3 driving in the region. This includes training and re-certification requirements. A working group was established with Dennis Haygood being the lead for the group. A product is expected by mid November.

Todd Lerke discussed the new NWCG driving standards. The new direction from NWCG is that federal fire agencies are exempt under many CDL requirements, including using a logbook. The new standards state that

one driver cannot drive more than 10 hours, and 2 drivers cannot drive more than the duty day limitation. The new standards will be forwarded via email to all engine operators who are interested.

Todd Lerke also discussed changes to the work-rest policy. The 2:1 is still valid with no new changes. However, there were some clarifications to make the new policy easier to understand. 2 days off after a 14 day assignment will be considered standard this year. A copy of the new policy will also be forwarded to all interested engine operators.

Mike Tucker went on to discuss contractor issues. Some contractors have been calling and acting interested in becoming involved with the committee. The official stance is that contractors are welcome to attend our meetings, but SWAEOC will in no way act as advisors to them or attend their meetings. Any inquiries about contract information and standards should be directed to the State Land Office.

There was also a review of the SWA Engine Academy. The working group transitioned to an overhead team organization on 2/18/04. Tony Sciacca is the IC, and the deputy IC is vacant. There are also openings for the logistics chief, deputy plans/finance, documentation unit leader, mechanic, and several coach openings. If anybody is interested in filling these positions contact Tony Sciacca on the Prescott National Forest.

Zone issues were brought up last. There was discussion on Unit/Position identifiers i.e. AFMO=Battalion Chief, hardhat colors to designate rank, etc. Currently there is a Interim Directive that SWAEOC is reviewing.

The Flagstaff zone brought up that there was interest in putting on a regional engine operator's workshop, and that the FLZ would sponsor it. All issues were put on a board and voted for in order of importance. The zone issues were ranked in this order to be brought to the region.

1. Interagency Zone Representation, i.e. more representation from non-participating zones.
2. SWAEOC getting involved with national policy/standards, and meeting with other regions to start dialogue.
3. Unit position identifiers-SWAEOC will support the policy.

The regional workshop will not be a priority for this year. But we might start sending a representative to the helitack and hotshot workshops to sit in and to advise them of what we are doing.

Projected meeting for the fall is in mid-November.

The meeting was adjourned around 1530.